

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for detecting cancer in a subject comprising contacting a biological sample obtained from the subject with an antibody that binds an epitope on a blood protein degradation peptide that is masked in the blood protein and determining the presence of an antibody-peptide complex.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the blood protein is fibrinogen.
- 10 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the antibody recognizes an epitope comprising the amino acids 15 to 21 of the β -chain of human fibrinogen.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.
- 15 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the presence of the antibody-peptide complex is determined by an assay comprising an enzyme-linked immunoadsorbent assay.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of screening a biological sample isolated from the subject for the presence of a second tumor marker.
- 20 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the second tumor marker is selected from the group consisting of PSA, CEA, CA 15-3, CA 19-9 and CA 125.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject is a mammal.
- 25 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the subject is a human.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the biological sample is a blood sample.
- 30 11. A method of detecting the presence of a fibrinogen degradation peptide associated with cancer in a biological sample comprising contacting the biological sample with an antibody that binds the degradation peptide and determining the presence of an antibody-peptide complex.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the antibody recognizes an epitope comprising the amino acids 15 to 21 of the β -chain of human fibrinogen.

5 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the presence of the antibody-peptide complex is determined by an assay comprising an enzyme-linked immunoassay assay.

10 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the antibody is immobilized to a solid support.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the enzyme-linked immunoassay comprises a capture immunoassay wherein the antibody-peptide complex is detected with a second antibody which binds the peptide.

15 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the second antibody is joined to a detectable label.

20 18. The antibody of claim 17, wherein the detectable label is selected from the group consisting of radioactive isotopes, enzymes, or chromophores.

25 19. A method of detecting a disease process associated with the degradation of fibrinogen in a mammal comprising testing a biological sample isolated from the mammal for the presence of a peptide having an unmasked fibrinogen epitope by contacting the blood sample isolated from the mammal with an antibody specific for the peptide and determining the presence of an antibody-peptide complex.

30 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the antibody recognizes an epitope comprising the amino acids 15 to 21 of the β -chain of human fibrinogen.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

and
AS